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SUBJECT: NAS MONTHLY REPORT FOR DECEMBER 2009

REF: 09 BOGOTA 3604

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The aerial eradication team reached its CY-2009 goal of 100,000 hectares (ha) of coca sprayed, with a total True Ground Area Coverage of 101,573 ha for the year. Manual eradication of coca for 2009 totaled approximately 61,000 ha, short of the goal of 70,000 ha; total eradication for 2009 was 162,500 ha, a decline of 29 percent from 2008's 229,000 ha (see reftel). In 2009, the Colombian National Police (CNP) seized 127.07 metric tons of cocaine/cocaine base, 460.93 metric tons of coca leaf, 180.35 metric tons of marijuana and 732 kgs of heroin. Total interdiction numbers for all GOC efforts will follow septel when results are complete. In December, the CNP Jungla International Course graduated 57 students, including 44 international students from Panama, Costa Rica, Paraguay, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Belize, Peru, Argentina, and Brazil; students from Argentina, Jamaica, and Peru also completed the Jungla Explosives and Demolitions Course. Illegal flights detected decreased 95 percent from 2003 to 2009, and the Air Bridge Denial (ABD) Program was nationalized on December 31. The Government of Colombia (GOC) demonstrated its political will to fight against domestic drug consumption when it passed a bill ending legal possession of a minimum dose of drugs for personal use. END SUMMARY.

- ¶I. Program Notes
- II. Aerial Eradication Program
- III. Manual Eradication Program
- IV. Plan Colombia Helicopter Program (PCHP)
- ¶V. Colombia National Police Air Service Support (ARAVI)
- VI. Interdiction Program
- VII. Base Security/Road Interdiction/NVD Program
- VIII. Maritime Interdiction Program

- IX. Communications/Weapons Program
- 1X. Port Security Program (PSP)
- XI. Reestablish Police Presence Program (Carabineros)
- XII. Air Bridge Denial (ABD) Program
- XIII. Environmental Program
- XIV. Individual Demobilization Program
- XV. Drug Demand Prevention (DDP) Program

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1I. PROGRAM NOTES

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12. (SBU) NAS Director and Deputy CNP Commander, Major General Parra, discussed how to improve NAS support mechanisms for the CNP. Both agreed that CNP leadership would assist NAS by providing CNP priority assistance projects and programs, with the major focus on

Embassy Colombia Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI) priority zones. In a December 29 meeting with Vice Minister of Defense Alejandro Arbalaez, NAS Director discussed CSDI, eradication, nationalization, and aircraft insurance issues. Arbalaez noted his desire to approach manual eradication more strategically in 2010 and suggested future meetings between Accion Social, the Ministry of Defense, NAS and other Embassy partners to develop a more comprehensive 2010 manual eradication plan and to better integrate Embassy CSDI planning. Vice Minister Arbalaez agreed that the Colombian police and military should continue to increasingly absorb the majority of operational costs for its units, and promised to assist the USG in prioritizing security-force assistance more along the lines of institutional capacity building. He agreed to pursue development of a longer-term nationalization plan to follow after the existing agreement for the GOC to assume title and financial responsibility for numerous INL-funded elements between now and 2012.

13. (SBU) NAS Director, along with USAID and MILGP representatives, visited former FARC strongholds Cano Amarillo and Vista Hermosa, communities in transition under the GOC's Macarena Consolidation Plan (PCIM). While these areas have made notable progress under PCIM, NAS Director assessed the overall situation as tenuous, a view shared by regional consolidation leaders (to be reported septel). Local residents and leaders raised concerns about challenges facing development initiatives at a community meeting in Cano Amarillo, citing severe difficulty in eking out a living due to: clarification of land ownership, inferior infrastructure (particularly roads/bridges), technical expertise, and lack of adequate credit and resources. In a separate PCIM meeting GOC officials noted the void created in the wake of military clearing operations, the shortfall of police in the area and the military's constitutional inability to carry out civilian law enforcement, and their perception of a lack of clear, sustained political will at the national level to ensure effective participation of responsible line ministries and other resource drivers. As the PCIM has been presented as a consolidation model for other areas and its implications may well transfer to other CSDI efforts, NAS is working with USAID and MILGP to further explore the stated concerns.

14. (SBU) NAS Director and Major General Pinilla, Chief of operations for Colombia's Air Force (COLAF), discussed the possibility of COLAF providing airlift assistance to NAS

eradication logistics efforts. The Narcotics Aviation Unit (NAU) and COLAF staff agreed to investigate options and payment possibilities to determine viability. Brigadier General Rey, Commander of the Colombian Army's (COLAR) Aviation Brigade, briefed NAS Director on COLAR's strategic aviation plan. BG Rey noted a need for infrastructure assistance to improve COLAR aviation's agility and ability to adequately cover some problematic regions, and agreed to develop priorities for economical, quickly completed projects for NAS consideration. Rey also advocated strongly for continued NAS advisor support after the Plan Colombia Helicopter Program (PCHP) is fully nationalized in 2012.

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II. AERIAL ERADICATION PROGRAM

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15. (SBU) The aerial eradication team reached its CY-2009 goal of 100,000 hectares (ha) of coca sprayed on December 4, with a total True Ground Area Coverage of 101,573 ha for the year, down from 133,500 ha in 2008 as a result of the decrease from 3 to 2 spray bases. Manual eradication of coca for 2009 totaled approximately 61,000 ha, short of the goal of 70,000 ha and well below 2008's almost 96,000 ha. Total eradication for 2009 was 162,500 ha, a decline of 29 percent over 2008's 229,000 ha, due in large part to resource constraints (see reftel). Aircraft based in Forward Operating Locations (FOLs) in Tumaco, Barrancabermeja, and San Jose del Guaviare sprayed a total of 7,120 hectares (ha) in December. A total of 4,644 ha were sprayed out of Tumaco, 1,442 out of Barrancabermeja, and 1,034 out of San Jose del Guaviare. During December, eradication aircraft experienced no hostile fire incidents. In 2009 there were 40 hostile fire incidents and 74 impacts; no deaths or injuries were sustained as a result of these incidents.

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III. MANUAL ERADICATION PROGRAM

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16. (SBU) The GOC's 2009 manual eradication campaign finished on December 20. Antinarcotics police units, with support from NAS, continued eradicating coca through December 30 per an order from the Director General of the CNP, eradicating approximately 1,500 ha without civilian eradicator support. Total manual eradication of coca for 2009 totaled approximately 61,000 ha, short of the 70,000 ha goal, and some 35,000 ha less than in 2008. The departments with significant manual eradication operations were Narino (16,524 ha), Antioquia (7,179), Meta (4,900), Putumayo (4,668), Vichada (4,758) and Caqueta (4,021). (NOTE: The official totals for manual eradication will be available in late January after the United Nations verifies manual eradication data.) Reduced funding for manual eradication, an overall drop in coca cultivation resulting in more dispersed coca, and an increase in attacks against manual eradicators all contributed to the slower pace of eradication in 2009.

17. (SBU) Separate from the GOC's manual eradication campaign (GME), COLAR and the CNP conducted manual eradication as part of their normal operations. In 2009, COLAR eradicated a total of 5,803 ha of coca and the CNP 5,510 ha (these numbers are included in the FY-2009 61,000 ha total). Poppy eradication in 2009, carried out mainly by the police in Cauca and Narino, totaled an estimated 550-600 ha, an increase from the 2008 total of 361 ha. Manual eradication of marijuana totaled some 170 ha in 2009. In 2009, approximately 40 people were killed during manual eradication operations (25 security personnel, 14 civilian eradicators, and one United Nations-hired topographer embedded within a manual eradication group). (NOTE: The number of reported fatalities is based on records held by the CNP, COLAR, Accion Social, reports

from the field and press reports. Final reporting of fatalities during manual eradication is not yet available.) In all of 2008, 26 security personnel and civilian eradicators were killed in manual eradication operations.

18. (SBU) The GOC's 2010 manual eradication program, with a goal of 70,000 ha, is expected to kick off on February 20, although some groups will begin eradicating in late January. In addition to fielding manual eradication groups across the country in 2010, the GOC is planning a pilot program in northern Antioquia and southern

Cordoba to create a coca-free zone in this strategic area in northern Colombia. The program integrates forced manual eradication with food subsidies and alternative development opportunities for coca farmers. The Embassy will be following this pilot closely to monitor its success and the extent to which it integrates into the GOC's consolidation plans for the northern Antioquia region. Other priorities for manual eradication in 2010 include the PCIM zone and development of a mechanism to eliminate low density, remnant coca in areas after GME and aerial eradication operations.

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IV. PLAN COLOMBIA HELICOPTER PROGRAM (PCHP)  
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19. (SBU) PCHP aircraft flew a total of 436 hours in December 2009, operating from bases in Tumaco, San Jose, Barrancabermeja, and Tolomaida. PCHP aircraft provided air assaults, air movements, reconnaissance, medical evacuations, and support missions for the Counter-Drug (CD) Brigade and other vetted COLAR units. The CD Brigade discovered one cocaine (HCl) laboratory with connections to a commercial oil pipeline and refining equipment with the capability of producing precursor chemicals, and another HCl laboratory with a seed-bed nursery of more than 60,000 coca plants. PCHP supported a GOC request to augment a high value target (HVT) operation in Meta. Operations were executed on December 30 and 31 near La Macarena against a FARC New Year's gathering comprised of elements of three FARC fronts, believed to include up to 100 guerillas. The GOC announced that FARC's 43rd Front leaders Miller Ospina Correa, alias "El Abuelo," and Eliseo Caicedo Garzon, alias "El Pitufo," were killed, along with 22 others, in the air raid and ground combat operations. 13 guerillas were captured during the raid, five others self demobilized, and armament, communication equipment and logistical supplies were seized. During this operation three PCHP helicopters experienced anomalies, but all aircraft were safely recovered without injuries to COLAR aircrews. PCHP helicopters flew 78 hours supporting 23 medical evacuation operations transporting a total of 77 patients.

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1V. COLOMBIAN NATIONAL POLICE (CNP) AIR SERVICE  
(ARAVI) SUPPORT  
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110. (SBU) ARAVI's NAS-supported fleet flew 2,169 mission hours in December. The seven UH-60 Black Hawks closed out the month with 179 flight hours and an operational readiness (OR) rate of 71 percent. One UH-60 is undergoing depot maintenance for structural repair due to hostile fire. The 10 Bell 212s flew 288 mission

hours with an OR rate of 62 percent. One Bell 212 has yet to be inducted to the Service Life Extension Program (SLEP)/Rewire, and another Bell 212 is currently in depot for SLEP maintenance. The CNP is conducting this SLEP without USG contractor support. The Huey II section's OR rate was 60 percent while flying 1,040 hours.

Eight Huey II's are in depot maintenance, seven for structural repairs, and one for power train inspection. The four DC-3s flew 306 hours in December with an OR rate of 56 percent. The last of three C-26 Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance Aerial Platforms (ISRAP) arrived and final acceptance has been completed.

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VI. INTERDICTION

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¶11. (SBU) During December, the CNP seized 5.98 metric tons of cocaine hydrochloride (HCl) and cocaine base, 14.84 metric tons of coca leaf, 15.57 metric tons of marijuana, 159 kgs of heroin, and 470 metric tons of precursor chemicals. The CNP also destroyed 11 cocaine HCl laboratories and 131 coca base laboratories. In 2009 (through December 31), the CNP seized 127.07 metric tons of cocaine/cocaine base, 460.93 metric tons of coca leaf, 180.35 metric tons of marijuana and 732 kgs of heroin. In the same time period, the CNP destroyed 188 cocaine HCl laboratories and 1,550 coca base laboratories, and seized 25,105 metric tons of precursor chemicals.

¶12. (SBU) On December 11, the CNP captured Mart????n Farf????n D????az, alias "Pijarbey," the number two man of the Pedro Oliverio Guerrero, alias "Cuchillo," criminal organization "Banda" in eastern Colombia. As the CNP conducted an airmobile assault on his farmhouse hideout 27 miles northwest of San Jose de Guaviare, "Pijarbey" fled on his motorcycle into the thick jungle. The CNP cordoned off a ten kilometer area, and after six hours of search patrols located and captured "Pijarbey."

¶13. (SBU) The Facatativa Ammunition Bunker, funded by NAS and built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, was completed on November 15 and the ribbon cutting ceremony conducted on December 7. The storage facility will service the Facatativa Junglas, the DIRAN National Ammunition Section, and the Carabineros School. NAS Bogota's Engineering Section is supervising the construction of a small arms range for the Junglas at Facatativa Police Base. The expected completion date is March 2010.

¶14. (SBU) Six U.S. Army Special Forces trainers completed their four-week course at the Pijaos Training Center on December 4 for the Jungla Special Recon unit on rural and urban operations. The U.S. Army 7th Special Forces Group Pijaos training team departed Colombia on December 18 and was replaced by another team in early January. On December 11, the Jungla International Course graduated 57 students, including 44 international students from Panama, Costa Rica, Paraguay, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Belize, Peru, Argentina, and Brazil. The Paraguayan Ambassador to Colombia, commander of the Panama Border Force, and several international police attaches attended the training. On December 17, the eight-week Jungla Explosives and Demolitions Course graduated 48 students, including one Argentine, one Jamaican, and two Peruvians. 56 Colombian policemen graduated from the eight-week Jungla Advanced Land Navigation Course, and 35 students graduated from the 23-week Jungla Combat Medic course on December 28.

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VII. BASE SECURITY/ROAD INTERDICTION/NVD PROGRAM

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¶15. (SBU) The next Base Security courses, to be conducted in Necocli (Phase II) and Tumaco, are in the planning phases and will run simultaneously beginning in February. The goal for the Necocli course is to continue the efforts at the new DIRAN Northwest Zone base with personnel from the DIRAN Company assigned to Necocli and additional DIRAN personnel from the Department of Antioquia. The goal of the Tumaco course is to address the security requirements at the CNP stations in Guayacana, Llorente, Espriella, and Chilvi. The course's students will include police assigned to the various stations and troops from the Colombian Marine Corps and the 1st Battalion of the CD Brigade located in Tumaco.

¶16. (SBU) Phase II of the Miraflores Indefinite Design Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) project was completed on December 17. The Phase I IDIQ project at Necocli was completed and included the installation of 250 meters of 2.4 meter high perimeter security walls and two 9 meter ballistic towers. The construction of an additional 315 meters of bastion walls is scheduled to be completed in January.

¶17. (SBU) Night Vision Device (NVD) program coordinator will begin training the COLAR CD Brigades located in Tumaco and Larandia on January 18. The annual accounting and inspection program continued throughout the country at CNP bases and units in El Dorado, Guaymaral, Facatativa, Espinal, Pijaos, Cespo, Mariquita, Larandia, Santa Marta, Tulua and the Transportation Directorate (DITRA).

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VIII. MARITIME INTERDICTION

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¶18. (SBU) NAS personnel traveled to Bahia Solano and met with the Colombian Coast Guard's Pacific Coast Commander and visited a new pier that was funded by the Colombian Navy. The new pier will allow the deployment of Midnight Express interceptors and other Colombian Coast Guard vessels in this critical area. NAS will support the GOC in Bahia Solano with billeting, office space, and a fuel storage system.

¶19. (SBU) On December 20, the Colombian Coast Guard seized 1,018 kilograms of marijuana during a routine patrol in Maguipi in the vicinity of Buenaventura. A joint Colombian Navy and Fiscalia (CTI) operation in the departments of Magdalena, Santander, Cesar, Antioquia, and Bolivar resulted in the arrests of 13 members of a drug trafficking organization, including key leadership and support personnel and active members of the Department of Administrative Security (DAS), CNP, and COLAR.

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IX. COMMUNICATIONS/WEAPONS

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¶20. (SBU) NAS advisor coordinated instruction for DIRAN, DICAR, and Colombian Coast Guard in support of the activation of SPOT personal satellite emergency communications devices. NAS and CNP identified

requirements to support a national data expansion project that will allow remote anti-narcotics bases access to the CNP's secure data infrastructure. NAS coordinated with Motorola Colombia to deliver 306 push to talk button radios to the CD Brigade. CNP's antinarcotics data team traveled to every seaport/airport to train DIRAN personnel on a new database that will track import/export information. The team also conducted a complete inventory of all information technology equipment at each location and submitted to NAS a list of recommended equipment for 2010. NAS recommended final destinations for 131 desktop computers that DIRAN received from CNP in December, and NAS is working with DIRAN to identify all computer-related requirements for 2010.

121. (SBU) NAS and DIRAN coordinated the transfer of explosives from Sibate to the new Facatativa Ammunition Bunker. NAS and DIRAN's police weapons section completed a study of weapons, ammunition, and explosives requirements for 2010.

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X. PORT SECURITY PROGRAM (PSP)

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122. (SBU) DIRAN's Ports and Airports Area (ARPAE) units seized more than 2 metric tons of cocaine, 130 kgs of heroin and arrested 44 people at Colombia's air and seaports during December. At the Bogota airport, 426.5 kgs of cocaine and 0.1 kgs of heroin were seized and 30 people arrested. At the Pereira airport, 10.2 kgs of cocaine were seized and one person was arrested. At Cali's Palmira airport, 17.1 kgs of cocaine, 1.3 kgs of heroin and five people arrested. At Medellin's Rionegro airport, 2.07 kgs of cocaine were seized and one person was arrested. At Cartagena's airport, 1.7 kgs of cocaine and 1 kg of heroin were seized, and three people arrested. In Buenaventura's port, 927 kgs of cocaine and one metric ton of marijuana were seized. In Cartagena's port, 185 kgs of cocaine were seized. In Santa Marta's port, 14 kgs of cocaine were seized. In Uraba's port area, 358.7 kgs of cocaine were seized and in Barranquilla's port 130 kgs of cocaine and 127 kgs of heroin were seized. Canine antidrug units participated in four cases including one at Colombia's southern border in Ipiales, where DIRAN units seized 10 kgs of heroin.

123. (SBU) ICE polygraph examiner conducted polygraph exams on 80 members of DIRAN's interdiction, intelligence, ports and airports units. 45 passed the exam, 33 failed, and 2 exams had inconclusive results. The DIRAN Polygraph Unit also supported DIRAN Internal Affairs Group with investigations against air and seaport personnel.

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XI. REESTABLISH POLICE PRESENCE PROGRAM  
(CARABINEROS)

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124. (SBU) The squadrons spent much of December deployed throughout the country to bolster security for increased travel during the holiday season. In response to the kidnapping of Caqueta's governor, the CNP deployed 212 Carabineros policemen from Flandes airfield in Tolima to Florencia, Caqueta. 176 were new graduates of the basic course and 36 were members of Carabineros Mobile

Squadron (EMCAR) 48, a national squadron. During December the Carabineros captured 137 people, 6 FARC/ELN, 28 criminal bands members, 6 narcotraffickers, 97 common criminals and 80 weapons. The squadrons also seized 289 gallons of liquid precursors, 485 kgs of solid precursors and destroyed 11 labs.

¶25. (SBU) The school at Pijaos graduated countermining, designated marksman, basic medic, and rural-operations courses in December. The school also continued training a new rural interdiction group in airmobile and water operations.

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XII. AIR BRIDGE DENIAL (ABD)  
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¶26. (SBU) Out of 1,644 tracks over Colombia, four aircraft were declared Unknown, Assumed Suspect (UAS). The Colombian Air Force and CNP located one of the aircraft shortly after landing, although the crew set the aircraft on fire and escaped the area. Of the other three, one exited Colombian airspace before it was intercepted, the GOC did not respond to one because it was outside their range when it was detected, and one was never located. On December 31, 2009, the ABD program was nationalized. All ABD assets were transferred to the GOC and the Colombian Air Force assumed responsibility for maintenance, logistics, and program operations. MILGP will now assume Embassy administration of the ABD program, with NAS assisting during the transition over the next few months. Illegal flights detected decreased from 657 in 2003, the first year of the ABD program, to 32 in all of 2009, a 95 percent reduction.

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XIII. ENVIRONMENTAL  
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¶27. (SBU) In December, the antinarcotics police received 601 complaints, closed 141 cases, compensated 8 complainants approximately \$3,829 USD, and initiated payments to 47 farmers in Arauca, Putumayo and Narino.

¶28. (SBU) Chris Kraul's article, "Top Guns of Tumaco Keep Coca Crops in Check," was published on December 16 in the LA Times. The full article can be found online at:  
[http://www.latimes.com/news/nation-and-world/ la-fg-coca-pilot16-2009dec16,0,3303324.story?page=1](http://www.latimes.com/news/nation-and-world/la-fg-coca-pilot16-2009dec16,0,3303324.story?page=1).

¶29. (SBU) On December 1, NAS' environmental scientist spoke to approximately 100 students from the Colegio Liceo Boston school in northern Bogota to explain the environmental damages caused by illicit crop production. This new outreach activity complements our current efforts by focusing on students who may not have knowledge of the detrimental environmental effects caused by drug production.

¶30. (SBU) NAS and a Colombian delegation consisting of the CNP, National Institute of Livestock and Rural Development (ICA), the Minister of Interior, of Environment, and the Dangerous Drugs Directorate (DNE), traveled to Villavicencio, Meta to conduct consultations with Arara Bacati-Lagos de Jamaicuru community leaders from Vaupes. This was the first meeting of a 2-part

process, where the police and DNE explained the aerial eradication program and the consultation process. At first, the indigenous community was skeptical to spray because of the alleged environmental harms caused by glyphosate, however, ICA thoroughly explained glyphosate, its use, and studies concluding glyphosate caused minimal harm to human health. The delegation will return to Meta in January to finish the consultation process.

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XIV. INDIVIDUAL DEMOBILIZATION PROGRAM  
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¶31. (SBU) The Ministry of Defense's (MOD) Humanitarian Attention Program for the Demobilized (PAHD) has received 20,555 combatants since 2002, including 157 insurgents in December and 2,638 total in 2009 as compared to 3,461 in 2008. 2,128 FARC members demobilized in 2009, down almost 30 percent from 3,027 in 2008. Although ELN demobilization slowed in the second half of 2009, a record 492 demobilizations was reached, 20 percent more than 2008.

¶32. (SBU) The PAHD launched two major holiday events designed to spur demobilization and hamper recruitment by illegal groups in the communities of La Macarena, Meta Department and Tibu, Norte de Santander Department. The community of Tibu, just 6 kilometers from the Venezuelan border, was thrilled by a Vallenato concert by multi-Latin Grammy winner Peter Manjares who performed his biggest hits and alluded to themes of peace and demobilization. The anti-illegal recruitment message was conveyed during both events by humorists Justo Franco and Camilo Cifuentes from the popular

Colombian television show "S????bados Felices." Micro-soccer tournaments and peace parades by local school children were also prominent aspects of the events.

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XV. DRUG DEMAND PREVENTION (DDP)  
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¶33. (SBU) After five failed attempts to prohibit the possession and use of a minimum dose of drugs, on December 9 President Uribe succeeded in passing a bill through the Colombian Congress amending the Constitution and repealing a 1994 Constitutional Court judgment that permitted possession of a minimum dose for personal consumption (septel to follow). President Uribe is touting the amendment as a significant step forward in the GOC's fight against the growing problem of "micro-trafficking" and drug consumption in Colombia.

¶34. (SBU) NAS coordinated with DIRAN personnel to establish Drug Abuse Resistance Training (DARE) programs in the CSDI zone of Tumaco. The outreach is aimed at fostering stronger relations between the CNP and local communities and will be integrated with NAS' Base Security course in Tumaco which commences in February.  
NICHOLS